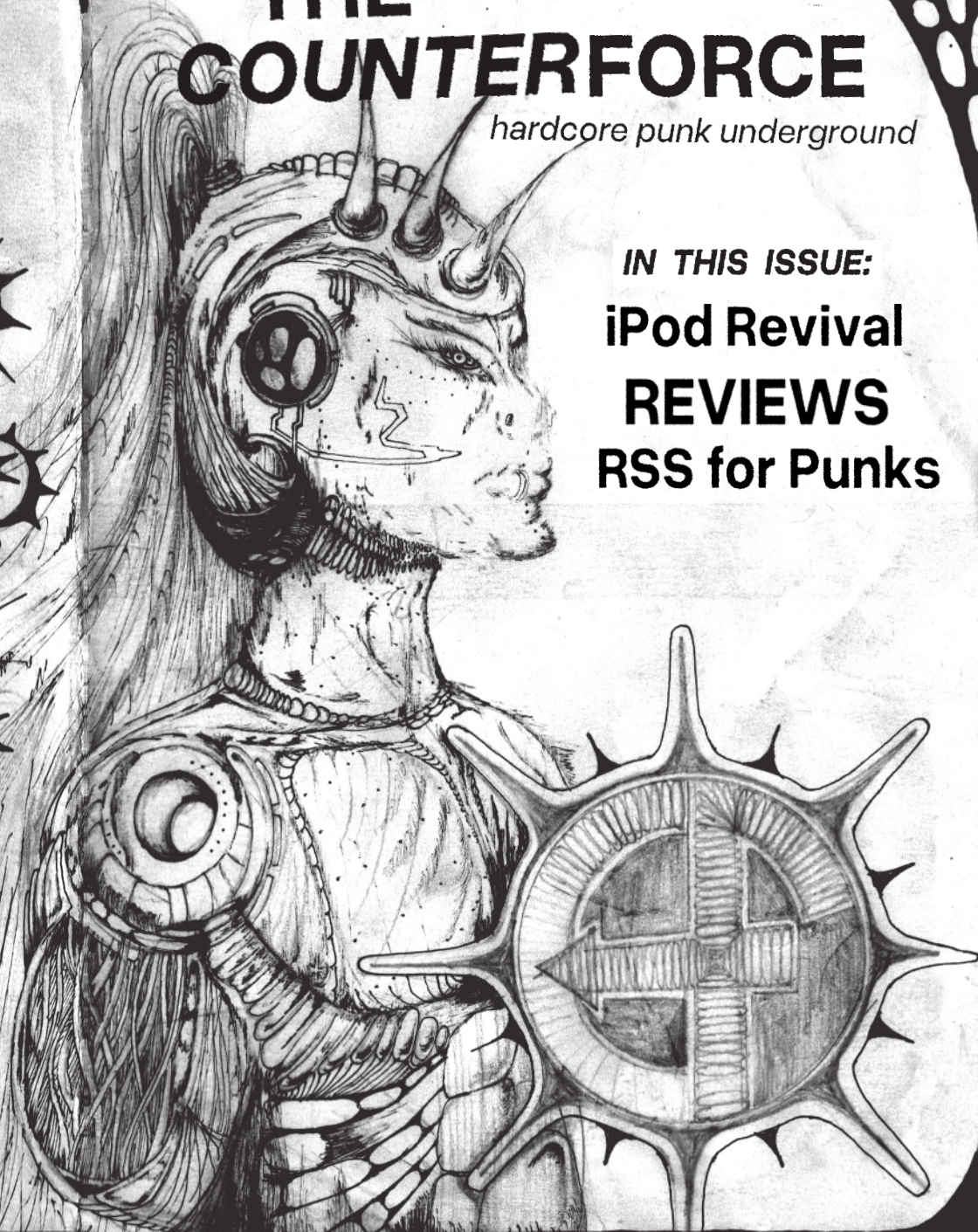


THE COUNTERFORCE

issue #2 — July 2024

hardcore punk underground

IN THIS ISSUE:
iPod Revival
REVIEWS
RSS for Punks



What is this? **The Counterforce** is an initiative to push back against the corporate capture of hardcore punk. Social media apps and streaming platforms dominate how we interact online, including how we share and distribute our music and ideas. The corporations that run these platforms extract massive profits from us, which they use to fund and facilitate exploitation, war, and genocide. Meanwhile, our independent and underground alternatives have eroded.

The goal of The Counterforce is to strengthen and grow the hardcore punk underground that still exists outside of this corporate capture. Rather than funnel punk into profit-driven walled gardens, we want to foment and encourage a culture that is autonomous and independent. This is not just a nostalgic, backward-facing project — we want to explore new alternatives for spreading hardcore punk online and offline.

You are reading issue #2 of the print version of The Counterforce.

Find the files to print and distribute this zine (and others like it) yourself online at <https://the-counterforce.org>

There, you will also find the other arms of The Counterforce:

A WEB ZINE

This site publishes reviews, letters, scene reports, profiles/interviews, rants, and how-to guides, all with an emphasis on projects that try to exist outside of corporate platforms.

In part, we hope this will encourage human-driven curation, recommendation, and discovery. Find out about new bands that aren't on the streaming sites. Submit a review of your own band. Compile a scene report or show review and send it in. We also publish articles and DIY how-to guides to help empower other punks to build and participate in a scene that's less centered around evil apps.

All this is published online, but also compiled into regular print zine editions to bring paper back to the punk show (like the version you are reading now).

A DIRECTORY OF SIMILARLY ALIGNED PROJECTS

The Internet is breaking down. Websites outside of a handful of apps have slowly disappeared, and the ones that are still out there are harder and harder to find.

The Counterforce provides a directory of these websites: blogs, archives, distros, zines, radio shows and podcasts... anywhere hardcore punk can be found online (and maybe offline too!).

A PLACE TO EXPERIMENT WITH AND LEARN ABOUT ALTERNATIVES

It's easy to shit on the corporate social media and streaming platforms, but what other options are there? There are alternatives and we try them out — public online show calendars, open-source social media, self-hosted music sharing — and encourage other punks to join us.



THE COUNTERFORCE IS A DISTRIBUTED AND COMMUNITY PROJECT

Get in touch if you want to submit!

Scene reports, interviews/profiles, zine/show/record reviews, how to guides. All pitches are welcome. Submission does not guarantee publication.

Web: <https://the-counterforce.org>

E-mail: the-counterforce@riseup.net

Mastodon: [@The_Counterforce@kolektiva.social](https://mstdn.social/@The_Counterforce)

PRINT THIS ZINE

This zine is available on our website as a PDF you can print out and distribute yourself, with more coming soon.

A DIGITAL ZINE DISTRO

Major punk fanzines of the past fell victim to the rising costs of printing and shipping. We publish printable PDFs of our zines online for anyone to print and distribute themselves, and encourage other zinesters to submit their own.

What if instead of shipping zines around the world, any punk anywhere could log on, download some PDFs and scam some copies to have a fully stocked, PWYC zine distro at the next show? Print-It-Yourself!

A HARD LINE AGAINST CONTRIBUTING TO FURTHER CORPORATE CAPTURE OF OUR SUBCULTURE

- No links to Instagram, Spotify, Linktree, Discord, or other corporate platforms.
- No coverage of releases that are on major labels, or only available digitally on corporate streaming platforms.
- Always independent and not-for-profit.

For expanding the hardcore punk mutual aid autonomous zone.

For facilitating human curation and recommendation.

For hardcore punk with context and politics.

Against celebrity, ladder climbers, clout chasers and influencers.

Against the algorithmic flattening of our subculture.

Against the capitalist death machine and the corporate capture of hardcore punk.

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Contributors to this issue: Corn, Crash JT, F.A.R. Company, Greg The Builder, Harry Yams, Martin Force, Misery, P-lou and Vanislejay. Cover by Sameio. Layout by Taylor Joy.

Contact:

E-mail: the-counterforce@riseup.net

Mastodon: [@The_Counterforce@kolektiva.social](https://mstdn.social/@The_Counterforce)

iPod Revival

by Harry Yams

I got reacquainted with iPods right around the pandemic. I was working construction and so many times I would have my headphones in, high-up in a scissor lift, hands in awkward places or covered in something nasty. I would be listening to whatever late 90s / early 2000's punk and Spotify would be like "oh you like this? Have you heard SCREECHING WEASEL?" It felt like the most punishing co-worker trying to relate musically but missing the mark. "Oh not that? What about PENNYWISE / VODOO GLOW SKULLS?"

Subsequently I got a new phone and it would no longer connect with my 2011 Macbook Pro. All of my friends' crappy Bandcamp MP3s wouldn't transfer over. I don't remember exactly but I stumbled across a YouTube video of someone "modding" an iPod and I quickly found a used black 5th Gen on Craigslist for \$30.00.



Modding an iPod or "flash modding" means opening up the device and replacing the old spinning disc hard drive to a modern solid-state storage option. Like a SD / Micro SD found in a digital camera or other devices, these can increase the storage from 4–20GB up to 256GB–1TB. Reducing the moving parts theoretically increases the iPods lifespan. The beauty of this mod is that there is no soldering involved. Most parts of the iPod have a push-in / locking connector on the motherboard (screen,

click-wheel, HD, battery, etc). Each generation is a little different. The iPod Touch and Nanos cannot be altered, while the iPod Mini (2004–2005) is more labor intensive but has an easier storage swap (just using a full size SD, it has the same pin configuration). I'll be mainly referencing the iPod classic (generations 3–6). These seem to be the most bomb proof and come apart into two halves with its very visible side seam. The classics all require an adapter to get flash memory into it. There are cheap routes on Ali-express, but the go-to in the "iPod community" (yes, it's a thing, a little brutal, but helpful no less) is the iFlash adapter. They have many options, but for the most part the SD card goes in a slot on the iFlash board and the existing iPod HD ribbon cable connects at the bottom.

While the device is open, it's also recommended to replace a few other things. The battery is simple to replace again with a locking connector and

RSS used to be *the way* to subscribe to feeds online, all across the Internet. This was before social media. RSS was just how you would follow news sites and blogs, how you would learn what was new without having to manually check every single website. And it was part of the earlier open web, it wasn't a single app controlled by a single company. Everyone was happy and proud to get you to subscribe to their RSS feed.

Even if you don't remember this time on the Internet, you can probably imagine how it changed. Social media arrived! And social media is also based on subscribing and following and feeds, but instead of one open web, each social media site has it's own closed feed. You can't just follow everyone from one app without signing up for accounts anymore... you have to be a logged-in user to subscribe to different feeds. And of course everything you see is algorithmically tuned and interspersed with advertising in order to maximize the time you spend in the app looking at ads and being tracked.

RSS doesn't lend itself to this extreme level of capitalist exploitation, so as corporate social media came to dominate how we use the Internet, RSS fell out of fashion. Many companies have realized that offering public RSS feeds, while convenient and empowering for users like us, hurts their ability to make money. Even Bandcamp used to have RSS feeds so you could follow new releases from artists, which they removed in favor of pushing people to sign up for Bandcamp accounts.

Podcasts have secretly been the most popular use of RSS for a long time. The openness and accessibility of RSS is part of what makes it so easy for anyone to start one (maybe too easy?). But this has frustrated media companies like Spotify, who have tried to make "Spotify-exclusive podcasts" a thing. Rather than being based on public RSS, these "podcasts" can only be subscribed and listened to from within the Spotify app. Other podcast media companies like iheartradio similarly try to get you to listen in their app by tempting you with bonus audio or ad-free content. Within their app, they aren't using an open, public standard like RSS, so they can trap you inside their siloed ecosystem, track your listening habits (down to what parts of an episode you skip!), deliver more accurately-targeted ads and extract more profit from you. That they'll spend millions of dollars on a single podcast to make it exclusive to their platform shows their desperation. These companies have reached a limit to how profitable they can become using a user/consumer-friendly open standard like RSS. Their only way they can make more money is by pushing everything off RSS.

OK OK so that's enough ranting. Give RSS a try if you want to break out of corporate social media a bit but still keep up with what's new. If you happen to make a website, a blog, or some other online project, make sure there is an RSS feed and let people know about it! This is all part of the greater Counterforce goals — demystifying things like RSS for punks, helping it be more widely adopted and easier to use will help free our culture from hostile corporations and capitalism!

To download The Counterforce RSS Starter pack go to the version of this guide on the website: <https://the-counterforce.org/rss-how-to>

Contribute

The Counterforce directory and this little RSS starter pack are both far from complete. If you know of a site, blog, YouTube channel, Mastodon/Fedi-verse account, event calendar, etc. that should be included, please submit it! <https://the-counterforce.org/contact-submit/>

RSS FOR MORE THAN JUST PUNK!

Hopefully this how-to guide and starter pack will get you into using RSS to follow your favourite punk and hardcore sources online that are outside of corporate social media. But RSS can be a great way to subscribe to all sorts of content and news. Essentially every blog and news website still uses RSS feeds. If you want to follow the news, you can definitely find RSS feeds for major and local newspapers, magazines, online news and analysis sites. Or maybe you prefer to dig deeper than the “mainstream media” — most independent bloggers using Substack or Wordpress support RSS. The same goes for anarchist counter-info and analysis sites like <https://itsgoigdown.org>, <https://scenes.noblogs.org> or <https://anarchistnews.org> — they all have RSS feeds. You can easily build a collection of RSS subscriptions in your news reader to get the news delivered to you, instead of just seeing article screen-shots in TikTok videos or Instagram stories.

There are RSS feeds for all kinds of cool shit... The Internet Archive has an RSS feed for collections, you can subscribe and see when new stuff is uploaded. Here is the RSS feed for the massive “zines” collection if you want a firehose of new zines: <https://archive.org/services/collection-rss.php?collection=zines>

Or here's an RSS feed for the “Attention K-Mart Shoppers” collection of K-Mart in-store cassette tapes so you don't miss when a new one is uploaded: <https://archive.org/services/collection-rss.php?collection=attentionkmartshoppers>

RSS FEEDS VS. SOCIAL MEDIA FEEDS

I've saved this rant for the end, just to spare you. The argument for how RSS can let you follow a lot of different places online and bring them all to one place on your phone, without needing an account or e-mail is self-evident. But if you wanna get a little political, or still need convincing, I'll try to get you to think about how RSS is empowering and liberatory, especially in our current culture dominated by closed, corporate social media apps.



no soldering. You can now get modified Nokia 3000mah batteries with the iPod connection on the end. The headphone jack is also easy to replace. These tend to wear out over the years of heavy use. Folks have now figured out how to splice in a Bluetooth transmitter to the headphone leads. Although its considered a mod, this takes a bit of skill with solder and wiring (but it's doable).

If you're a millionaire, Moonlit Market now makes a retrofit back that includes Bluetooth, USB-C, flash drive, and a large battery for \$329 CAD.

There are a million detailed guides and videos out there for modding, so this is just an idea of what can be done.

ACQUIRING MUSIC IN 2024

Soulseek – is still running and operational. For the folks unfamiliar, it's like Napster, a peer-2-peer connection for downloading music and used heavily by music nerds. I've often found old obscure Vancouver Island bands on it that I thought were lost forever.

Bandcamp – Obviously a great resource. With its recent sales to Epic Games and Songtradr, and its lack of advertising, I have trust issues that it will exist forever, similar to CBC radio 3 or New Music Canada[?] that hosted DIY music in the early 2000's. Or even Myspace for that matter.

Blogspots – There are a slew of folks posting about their music collection and either ripping them onto a file-sharing website or showing you where to

go. Terminal Escape is still going! While others like Remote Outpost's aren't, they still contain a massive back-catalog of music to check out.

Trade USB keys – they are cheap and you can probably figure out how to get USB-A onto whatever computer you are using. Your friends probably have weird gems in their collections, and if you are reading this, then you know Martin does.

Torrents – still work. I often find if there is something you want that exists in a torrent then it's probably popular enough to find elsewhere.

YouTube rippers – I haven't tried this yet, but it's commonly recommended in the iPod forums. I think they mount on a web-browser and convert YouTube video-audio into an MP3 file.

Connecting an iPod to a computer is still the same. If you are running a modern Mac, a finder window appears, similar to the original iTunes when you connect an iPod. If you are using Windows or Linux, there are various applications that still work.

Alternatively, you can now run Rockbox on the iPod itself and manage your MP3s in folders? Rockbox is an open-source software replacement that runs on a variety of MP3 players and portable music devices. I have yet to try Rockbox, due to my old Mac working with the device just fine.

There is also software to get music off an iPod. I have had varied success with these programs, but it can be done.

GETTING AN IPOD IN 2024

Sadly with its new gained popularity, the price of iPods has gone up. Even on Ebay or in the thrift an iPod classic can go for \$100. For me, that is what has led to the weird "hunt" that I guess other collectors appeal to in their weird obsessions. If I find one on Craigslist sub \$30 I will try to get it, or it's something I keep an eye out for at yard sales.

It's neat finding one and seeing what someone was listening to 20 years ago, or who's name is engraved on the back (such a weird option). Or finding the black and red U2 edition iPod (2004–2006) – years before they forced that album on your phone (2013).

Collecting a few has led me to make themed iPods, some only containing sappy pop-punk, or crappy-crust, or the entire collection of a very niche podcast. Each on their own separate device. It's also the perfect machine for taking on such dorky conquests such as The MOTORHEAD Challenge.

There are downsides to all this of course. Downloading music, organizing and transferring it, using a 30-pin USB cable, and then using wired headphones isn't

Alternatively, if you know a YouTube channel's Channel ID you can just reconstruct the RSS feed yourself. https://www.youtube.com/feeds/videos.xml?channel_id=PASTE_CHANNEL_ID_HERE

Paste that into your feed reader and you'll be subscribed! You'll know whenever a new video is posted.

Bonus: NewPipe

If you are a real YouTube head, you can also use the Android app NewPipe (<https://newpipe.net/>). NewPipe is a free, open source YouTube app that makes using YouTube very pleasant... no need for an account, no ads, background listening, and you can download any videos you want to enjoy offline. Really doing the Lord's work. NewPipe also lets you subscribe to YouTube channels without a Google/YouTube account, all just in the app. It's not RSS-based, and maybe NewPipe deserves it's own how-to guide at some point... but for now if you listen to a lot of music or watch a lot of videos on YouTube check it out, at the very least for the ad-dodging features!

tumblr

Even tumblr accounts have an RSS feed! Just add /rss to the URL (are you noticing a pattern?). I know there are still a few punks kicking around on tumblr, now you can keep up with them (or maybe make yourself a nice feed of inspo aesthetic accounts that are still posting). Not to mention RSS helps you bypass the prompt to login to see content. Here's what the RSS feed link looks like for the sadly defunct Hardcore Architecture tumblr:

<https://hardcorearchitecture.tumblr.com/rss>

THE COUNTERFORCE RSS STARTER PACK

One aspect of The Counterforce is the online directory we want to build and maintain of punk/hardcore sites on the Internet. We've got blogs, websites, archives, and radio shows/podcasts – many of which include RSS feeds! I've put all of those feeds together with some active YouTube and other video/music channels, the Ask A Punk event calendars, a few other blogs and Substacks. You can import this .opml file to your feed reader to subscribe to them all in one shot. They're already sorted into different categories, and you can always delete the ones you don't vibe with. The Counterforce gift to you, to help you get started with RSS!

All feeds	818
★ Saved articles	
▼ ASK A PUNK	75
▼ Blogs	153
▼ Mp3 Blogs	300
▼ Podcasts	155
▼ The Counterforce	29
▼ Tube	106

FINDING RSS FEEDS

Websites/Blogs

There are RSS feeds everywhere online, any website that has any kind of blog or posts where new content is added will usually have an RSS feed. Usually you can just paste or share the URL for the homepage of the site into your feed reader like in the previous example, and your feed reader will automatically find the special RSS feed. This will work with most major news sites, blogs, any site powered by Wordpress, Blogspots, Substacks, even Mastodon accounts! Every Mastodon account has a built in RSS feed of public posts, meaning you can subscribe to it from your RSS reader! No need to sign up for a Mastodon account and “Follow” big accounts if you just want to see what’s new.

Sometimes your feed reader might not find the RSS feed, but if you are pretty sure it exists you can try adding /feed or /rss to the URL. You might have to hunt for or guess at this link, depending on how friendly the website is. There are some special tricks to finding RSS feeds for other things online, like YouTube channels – I’ll go over that in the next section.



RSS has a logo/icon, and if you spot this on the site it usually means you’ve found an RSS feed!

HUNTING FOR FEEDS

YouTube

Every YouTube channel has an RSS feed, but Google keeps this kinda secret because they would prefer if you signed up for a Google account to Like and Subscribe to YouTube channels. But you can just use RSS and have new videos show up in your RSS feed reader. No need for a Google/YouTube account!

To find the RSS feed for a channel, you do have to do some light hack-ing. First, you gotta load the channel’s page in a browser (like <https://www.youtube.com/@NoDeal>) and look at the page source code. You can do this easily on a computer by right clicking and selecting “View Page Source”. On a phone, you can add `view-source:` to the front of the URL (like `view-source:https://www.youtube.com/@NoDeal`).

Now you just use the Find In Page feature in your browser to search for “rss” in the source. You gotta find the magic link that looks like this:

```
https://www.youtube.com/feeds/videos.xml?channel_id=UCEDz7xOK3PzoNVDAjuBoIAw
```

always appealing. It’s more time consuming than just typing something into a search bar. It sucks buying a “damaged iPod” off eBay, only to find the motherboard has been destroyed and is useless. Or setting out on your day only to find you forgot to charge yet another device. There are drawbacks for sure.



I ENJOY USING AN IPOD IN 2024 FOR A FEW REASONS

First, and I’ll try not to be too gate-keep-y, there is a lot of stuff I like listening to that’s not on Spotify or Apple music. The debut albums from THREE INCHES OF BLOOD or HOLDING HANDS, a lot of Band-camp artists, even NEIL YOUNG for a minute (and who’s to say he won’t do it again).

Having control over “my music” is something an iPod is great at. I like

listening to GREEN DAY’s “Dookie” but I don’t want that to lead into the “Father Of All…” album. It’s nice on an iPod unintentionally choosing these limits. Albums on Spotify also get their tracklists rearranged similar to the Star Wars movies getting re-edited, which I hate. Contrarily, if I wanna listen to JUDAS PRIEST’s “British Steel” but hate when “Red, White, & Blue” comes on, I can just leave it off.

I like the simplicity. I often get overwhelmed and distracted with Spotify. I can’t remember how to find what I wanted to listen to, and put on what I was playing last. I usually just want to put on music I like and not think about it. Using the iPods that are just text I find less distracting. I can just spin the wheel in the artist menu and it will usually land on something I want to listen to or I’ll see a name that I haven’t thought about in a while. It feels like folks are starting to notice having access to every movie, TV show, and song ever made is overwhelming. Much like a restaurant menu with 100 things on it, it’s sometimes nice when the options are limited to just a few things you enjoy.

I still love shuffle. Going from BOLT THROWER’s “No Guts, No Glory” into DE LA SOUL’s Eye Know is a back-to-back I never would have thought of, let alone a modern algorithm. But a machine with a randomizer that doesn’t have to think often makes for some hilarious song runs or mixes. Friends have told me this would drive them crazy, but I personally love it.

I like that it’s apart from my phone. iPods are great for going on a bike ride or doing a task you don’t want to be distracted from. You’re not getting noti-

fications or your boss calling you on your time off. You're also not going to unconsciously start looking at social media or Mastodon.

I'm sentimental (like all the time). Friends bands, old bands, bands that remind me of certain times or places, embarrassing albums, or projects from folks that have passed. An iPod is a simple device to contain, organize, preserve, and enjoy it all.

HARRY’S FOREVER IPOD ALBUMS

- PAINTED YOUTH – “Painted Youth”
- DOGGO – [Both Albums]
- NOBRIDGE – “Demo Fest”
- BRATTATTOO / PEROGIE – “split”
- MILK MUSIC – “Beyond Living”
- DESASTER – “A Touch of Medieval Darkness”
- COMPLICATIONS – “Demo”
- SILENT ERA – “Tape”
- M-BLANKET – “Safety” 7”
- RAMMER (most of their stuff)
- HIS HERO IS GONE – “Monuments to Thieves”



LINKS

- iFlash: <https://iflash.xyz>
- Rockbox: <https://www.rockbox.org/>
- Moonlit Market: <https://moonlit.market/>

CHOOSING A FEED READER

There are hundreds of different ways to subscribe to RSS feeds. There's an RSS feed reader available for any computer or mobile device. You can put one on your e-reader. A lot of e-mail clients can also subscribe to RSS feeds. If you want to nerd out, you really can go deep and find the best solution that works for you. For this how-to guide, I'm just going to recommend the best feed reader imo for Android and iOS:



Feeder for Android

The best RSS feed reader for Android is Feeder. It's open source and free, it works great.



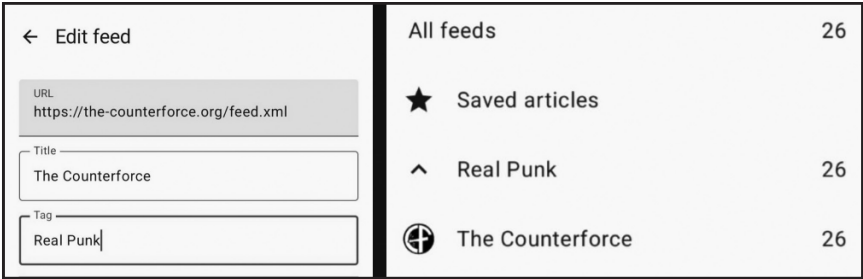
NetNewsWire for iOS / Mac OS

NetNewsWire! It's free and open source and nice.

SUBSCRIBING TO YOUR FIRST FEED

All the screenshots in this article are from Feeder on an Android phone, but the process is basically the same for any good feed reader. In an ideal situation, you just select Add Feed and paste in the URL of the site. If you're using a phone you can "share" the site from your browser to your feed reader app, and the app will know you are trying to add a new RSS feed. We want to subscribe to the RSS feed for The Counterforce website (<https://the-counterforce.org>) so we share that to Feeder. Feeder finds the RSS feed, which is actually at <https://the-counterforce.org/feed.xml>

When adding a new feed (or editing it later on) you can usually tag or sort it into a subfolder or subcategories. This allows you to sort things out by topic however you like (e.g. "Real Punk", "Poser Shit", "Doom Scroll", "Enemies", etc) or you can just bask in the firehose of content that is "all feeds." Feed readers also keep track of what you've read or haven't read yet.



The Counterforce RSS feed has been added under Real Punk

RSS just sets up an open standard where anything on the Internet can publish a public feed of new content in a simple format. Users can use a variety of applications (an “aggregator” or “**feed reader**”) to subscribe to RSS feeds of content they want to follow. Most news websites and blogs will have an RSS feed. Rather than having to manually check each individual website to see if there are any new posts or stories, you can use a **feed reader** to subscribe to the RSS feeds of each one. Your feed reader automatically checks all the feeds you are subscribed to, and will present everything new, or notify you when there is a new post from a particular site if you want. Usually all the posts are formatted nicely so it’s easy to browse and read without leaving the feed reader (b: this often means no ads!).

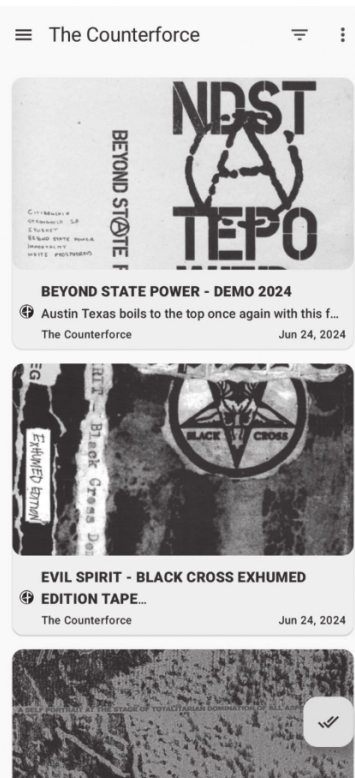
Unless you are an older nerd there is a good chance you’ve never heard of RSS, but even if you haven’t heard of it, you have almost certainly used it: **Podcasts** are based on RSS. Every podcast is actually just an RSS feed of new audio files, and podcast apps are just RSS feed readers designed to prioritize audio content. Many podcast apps will connect to different public directories of podcasts, so as a user you don’t have to manually go out and find the RSS feeds for each one. But if you have ever supported a podcast on a platform like Patreon, that special subscribe-only link you are given to “paste into your favorite podcast app” is an RSS feed. The Maximum Rocknroll podcast of MRR Radio (currently almost at 2000 episodes!) is online here: <https://www.maximumrocknroll.com/radio/>

PODCAST

Click [HERE](#) to subscribe to the MRR Radio podcast via iTunes, or use the feed address below to subscribe manually with any RSS feed reader.

<https://www.maximumrocknroll.com/cat/mrr-radio/mrr-radio-podcast/feed/>

They explain it pretty well! You can subscribe to the MRR Radio podcast by dropping that feed link into any feed reader! All podcasts work like this under the hood. So if you’ve ever subscribed to a podcast, you’ve already used RSS. But RSS can be used for a lot more than just podcasts...



REVIEWS



EPOXI – Demo 2023

I am a furniture builder by trade. I mention this because the use of epoxy (with a Y) has become something of a plague to my craft. I fucking hate epoxy tables. Unoriginal, tacky bullshit.

EPOXI (with an I) on the other hand, fucking rules. EPOXI is from Bloomington, IN and the label that put out their tape says they are hardcore that sounds **punk** and I’m inclined to agree. This is the type of ripping and raging punk I tend to associate with bands from the often overlooked midwest. EPOXI starts this demo off with an intro track that’s sole purpose is to make you move, something it does successfully. The rest of the tape takes off from there. These songs are fast, have the appropriate stops and direction changes, mosh parts, and even well placed and tasteful leads.

While all the instruments sound great, the vocals stand out to me the most. They are dynamic and urgent, sometimes speeding up to fit all the lyrics in their assigned parts. Also, I love an angry talking part like the one at the end of “Brain Lock”. The tape sounds punk, and by that I mean shitty in a way that makes it sound even better than it would. I tend to prefer my own band’s recordings to sound a little more polished, but that’s because I am a coward, and I am always impressed when a band can make the less refined recording part

of the sound, as if it’s an uncredited member. Maybe they’re the one who will answer the band group chat in a timely manner....Anyway, this tape rules I hope there is more to come.

You can listen to EPOXI – Demo 2023 on the Upset Condition Tapes bandcamp: <https://upsetconditiontapes.bandcamp.com/album/demo-2023>

—Greg The Builder



HUMAN TARGET – Demo 2023

“Human target, I’m (on?) the target, you’re on the fucking target, this is HUMAN TARGET.” That’s how the demo tape from this Winnipeg, MB band starts. An intro like that lets you know this is stupid music for stupid people. They were one of a pair of Winnipeg bands that recently played the first show in 10 years at the local legion here. This band self-identifies as “USHC” which might be annoying for some people tired of whatever trend that is, but this band was good. The riffs are stupid, the breakdowns are stupid and aplenty. But behind the stupid wrapping, I was surprised by the (relative) density and depth of the lyrics. Winnipeg is not a nice place. It’s colder than Mars and just as bleak. These guys aren’t trend-hopping big-city art students. The lyrics come from the experience of living in such a bleak difficult place, spanning from the personal to the political. It was a pleasant discovery after seeing a band that, after that lowbrow intro, closes the tape by finishing the eponymous song with a proper ringout... only

to bring back the breakdown for another good 30 seconds after the singer essentially spells the band name out for us: “*Hu-Man Tar-Get.*” HUMAN TARGET is more on the stupid side (which I like just fine) but are approaching the ideal juxtaposition of highbrow and lowbrow.

The tape is self-released, and you can listen here: <https://humantargethc.bandcamp.com/album/demo-2023>

—Martin Force

NUCLEAR MAN



NUCLEAR MAN — Demo 2023

Another Winnipeg, MB “USHC” band. Compared to HUMAN TARGET (who I saw/got a demo from at the same recent Legion show in Montreal), NUCLEAR TARGET seems a bit more “formulaic” when it comes to the self-applied “USHC” label. Which is not bad: the tones are dialed in, the lyrics are simple and hard to decipher (except for “Warhead”: “*NUCLEAR WARHEADS WERE ALL GONNA DIE*”), the singer is some kind of hardcore punk cartoon character, the breakdowns are plodding and almost too slow. They know what they are doing, and they are doing it well. Bands like this have gotta perform to stand out from the crowd, and their live show definitely delivered in that regard. I wouldn’t miss this band if I had the chance to see them again (ideally on the white floor in well-lit auditorium).

Tape is self-released, listen to is here: <https://nuclearman.bandcamp.com/album/demo-2023>

—Martin Force



INDUSTRY — “A SELF PORTRAIT AT THE STAGE OF TOTALITARIAN DOMINATION OF ALL ASPECTS OF LIFE”

If the over the top album title wasn’t enough of a big hit, INDUSTRY is finely distilled UK style anarcho-punk that is sharp as a knife. Caustic yet clear vocals bark out politically charged lyrics, machine gun drums back tight, cutting guitar riffs and a never too slinky bass tone rounds out this debut from the Berlin based international crew. The second track “Totalitarian Domination” sums it up nicely with the repeated line “*Look in the mirror and you will see a self-portrait at the stage of totalitarian domination of life*” pointing the finger directly at the listener, to wake up and realize change begins with the self. Making a direct nod to their inspirations, INDUSTRY’s charged cover of the A.L.F. compilation EXIT-STANCE song “They Kill Dogs” takes a classic of the genre and breathes new vitriol and spite aimed at those who are still unwilling to hear the plea of those who cannot advocate for themselves. “Spiritual Debts” starts with a rumbling drum and bass march that almost breaks into a post punk build that is rewarded with a tempo change and vocals that interrogate those who turn a blind eye to the mass suffering created by corporations and greed that effect us all, no matter how much one tries to dull themselves to our reality.

FFO: CONFLICT, FLUX, THIS IS THE A.L.F. compilation

Listen to the album on bandcamp here: <https://staticagemusik.bandcamp.com/album/industry-a-self-portrait-at-the-stage->



RSS is a system for freely subscribing to content online. Using RSS, you can build a feed of sources you want to follow — from news and blogs to podcasts and videos — without signing up for accounts and without using social media. You can receive notifications when anything new is posted, and keep track of what you’ve already read/seen. RSS predates social media, and although it’s much less popular now than in its heyday, it is experiencing somewhat of a resurgence among those who are looking for a more empowering and pleasant way to engage with the internet. It’s not the easiest thing to get into, so I wanted to put together a brief how-to to help anyone curious get started, including a “starter pack” of hardcore/punk related RSS feeds to subscribe to... but you can use RSS to follow a lot more than just punk stuff!

WHAT IS RSS?

RSS stands for *Really Simple Syndication*. RSS was the first successful and widespread way people could subscribe to things on the Internet, especially before the rise of social media.



is starting to find her stride because she seemed a lot more comfortable on the stage tonight than previous times I have seen them play big rooms.

TOTAL NADA jumped on the bill due to a last minute cancellation by ACID CASUALTIES. This band is really in their prime. Even though this was effectively a tour warm-up show for their US bassist, the set was so tight it felt more like they were just coming off a 3 week tour rather than about to start one. I swear they get better every single show, and I think their best sets are always at Sala. If you are in the East or Southern US don't miss them in July. The runway got turned sideways against the stage, and at this point the show was feeling pretty well attended. I tried to get the crowd into moshing across the runway, Boris even encouraged folks to interact with this strange platform in the middle of where the pit would usually be, but so far no takers.

MIRAGE from New York are still coming off their relatively recent release of "Legato Alla Rovina" on Roachleg Records. At this point, the fog machine and the crowd had both been warmed up. They are a fast hardcore punk band in the best way. The crowd really started going and a few good circle pits(!) broke out, which is very rare in Montreal. Whether they were completely spontaneous or staged is still up for debate, and I don't think we'll ever really know. Either way the band seemed to feed off the crowd energy, much like the circular energy of the pit.

HEZ from Panama were the special headliner. I think they last played Montreal for Varning XI (with FRAMTID and ASPECTS OF WAR... what a year!). Sadly this time their guitarist had a visa or border issue so our own Etienne was drafted to fill in (making this is third set of the night). Varning is fun, but HEZ certainly deserved a headliner show like this. The crowd and band both went off, moving the whole (very big!) room for the duration of the set. On recordings HEZ have a certain production but live it was noisy, fast and chaotic. We finally got a few stage dives off the runway. Overall, a top tier set.

This show was a 5/5 lineup, and one of the best so far in a great year of Montreal shows.

Listen to the bands:

RECALL: <https://recall.rock>

TENAZ: <https://tenaz.bandcamp.com>

TOTAL NADA: <https://totalnada.bandcamp.com>

MIRAGE: <https://roachlegrecords.bandcamp.com/album/mirage-legato-alla-rovina>

HEZ: <https://hez666.bandcamp.com/>

—Vanislejay / Martin Force

of-totalitarian-domination-of-all-aspects-of-human-life

Record available for purchase through Static Age Musik

—Misery



EVIL SPIRIT — “Black Cross Demo” (Exhumed Edition)

Doing a video promo for Roachy awhile back now I got given a glimpse into upcoming releases coming out on the ever so busy and consistent label from new york (Roachleg Records). In amongst this folder laid a folder called EVIL SPIRIT, ears pricked up like a scrap yard guard dog seeing an intruder on a Friday night when the tracks started to play. The sound quality was already sounding like it came from a boombox running on low batteries, so I was very keen to here the final results dub to tape again. There's not much information on this band except for a relic of a bandcamp page from over a decade ago with this same demo, so this recording isn't from 2023 hence the “Exhumed” edition title. From what Roachy told me it was sent to him via tape from a skid row motel address?? But I have my conspiracy about this band, but that's another page of rambling and not worth explaining here just in case I'm wrong hahhahaha.

Sounding like all the gems from 80s japan, think G.I.S.M., ZOOU to keep it simple. But the final result when I finally got the physical copy of this release was a exactly what I love!! 2 generation sounding tape with sounds peaking into the red and dipping in and out of volume here and there to give it that penpal

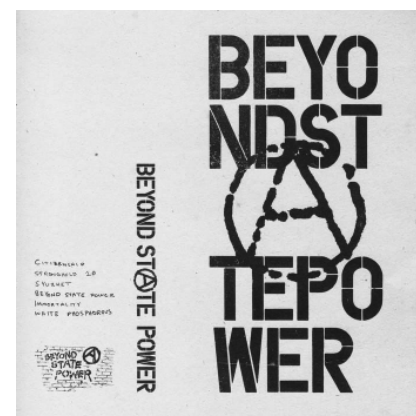
mix tape feeling. It seems to be 3 tracks that blend into one adventure. Starting of with the M.A.N.-sounding noise intro to set the pace and then dives into the banger track on this tape. Also the extra treat to this track is the guitar solo which turned into a whistling ear worm for me and the reason for consistent repeat of the tape. The solo sounds like Randy Uchida on a \$40 dollar budget, but still holds the might and spirit of a Randy Uchida guitar solo. Especially the harmony bit of the guitar solo it is so disgustingly spot on and catchy. Then back to some more M.A.N. noise to round it up.

10 out 10 nothing to fault here and a reminder that a demo tape is a demo tape and no need to go to a studio to do one, EVIL SPIRIT prove that here by apparently doing it from a motel room in skid row, hahahahaha.

Released on ROACHLEG RECORDS 2023

Listen here: <https://roachlegrecords.bandcamp.com/album/evil-spirit-black-cross>

—F.A.R. Company



BEYOND STATE POWER — Demo 2024

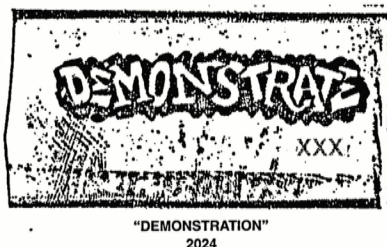
Austin Texas boils to the top once again with this fast and furious, self described Street Punk(?) featuring members of GREEN JAG, IRON YOUTH (TX) and SAVE OUR CHILDREN, BEYOND STATE POWER gets right to the point with these 6 blistering anarcho-punk anthems. Tight drums, gravely vocals that are just fuzzy enough to give them some bite and straight-forward, ripping riffs. While not reinventing the wheel by any means, this is distilled punk at its finest; raw, politically charged and short enough to justify a few more listens to get a

better taste. There is no love for the illusion of power that comes from war, greed or subervience. BEYOND STATE POWER titular track cries out those exact words, a hopeful rally to think and dream beyond the shackles that society places on us all.

FFO: CONFLICT, NEKRON 9, GAS RAG

Take a listen: <https://beyondstatepower.bandcamp.com/album/demo-2024>

—Misery



DEMONSTRATE — “DEMONSTRATION” 2024

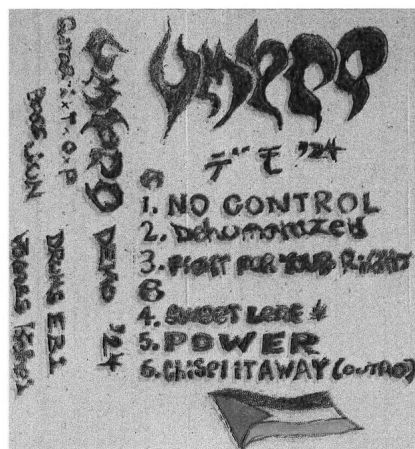
I've been putting back on writing this review for a while now. Not that it's a very intricate or complicated release, I've just been having an awful time lately preventing me from doing anything really. That was until I decided to listen to this demo again after a period of time of feeling overwhelmed by the smallest tasks. I got back to it and it clicked, it did exactly what it was made to do.

“DEMONSTRATION” 2024 is tough love on tape. From the beginning, the demo starts with the line “be yourself, there's nothing you can't do” delivered with such passion and anger, like a friend that gets pissed off and tired of seeing you wasting your full potential. This theme continues with the song “Speak up” with self affirmation lyrics over some of the best hardcore music I've heard in a while. I can safely say it is my favorite hardcore song of 2024. This release comes at a perfect time, along other DMU demos such as the NO IDOLS demo, where a certain fatigue of the current sound of popular hardcore music can be felt. It's a return to the sources that still feel contemporary and I am here for it. This demo will make you want to mosh in your living room, dive from your dinner table and learn all the lyrics for when they inevitably get to play

your town. Musically there's not a dull moment. Heavily influenced by the 80's NYHC sound reminiscent of the likes of STRAIGHT AHEAD not only sonically but also purposefully. Every song is powerful, straightforward and packed with raw emotions accentuated by a heavily distorted recording that makes it all blend perfectly. This might be my hardcore release of 2024. This is what a hardcore demo should sound like. I am taking notes and so should you.

Listen here: <https://designatedmoshersunit.bandcamp.com/album/dmu-016-demonstration-demonstration-2024>

Tapes available on Designated Moshers Unit
—P-lou



UMBRO — Demo 2024

Clocking in at just 10 minutes, UMBRO's 2024 demo solidifies Japan's reputation as a powerhouse in the punk scene. UMBRO delivers chaotic, disparaging noise, but not in the way typically associated with Japanese punk outfits. Instead, they create a soundscape that's both abrasive and dissonant, setting themselves apart in the noisy punk genre through their use of a chorus pedal and inconsistency in tempo. While the chorus pedal in hardcore punk isn't for everyone, UMBRO's gritty vocals distinguish them from both the post-punk bands commonly linked to this effect and other hardcore punk groups with similar guitar tones. In my opinion, they skillfully blend the best elements of each of these worlds.

Side B's “Power” stands out as my favorite track. The vocals and overall tone of the demo

Listen to these bands:
LAURA KRIEG: <https://laurakrieg.bandcamp.com>
HRT: <https://hrmtl.bandcamp.com/>
SLASH NEEDED: <https://slashneed.bandcamp.com/track/worm>
BLU ANXXIETY: <https://bluanxxiety.bandcamp.com/>

—Vanislejay



HEZ // MIRAGE // TOTAL NADA // TENAZ // RECALL @ La Sala Rossa, Montreal, June 22, 2024

This was day 2 of the Noise Not Borders curated shows at the Suoni Per Il Popolo fest. This was a big weekend for shows in Montreal, with multiple shows Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Just a regular Montreal summer-kick-off weekend. I didn't want to miss any of it so I got there early and had a nice time hanging out out front of the venue. This venue has a sub stage that gets set up on the floor for smaller shows and it was placed in front of the main stage, like a short runway jutting out. It made for some interesting mosh pit dynamics which I'll get into later.

RECALL is one of Montreal's newer bands, but a bit of a supergroup, bringing together members from too many other bands to name. They opened up the show with a solid set of their raw hardcore punk. The early crowd was a bit thin, but they still played a hard set. The vocalist Misery used the runway to engage with the crowd and made a good speech about supporting legal support for DULF from Vancouver. Two guitars: loud, noisy, and fun.

TENAZ has been playing for a year or two and recently celebrated their demo tape release. They play a minimalist or stripped down take on punk but with quite imposing vocals. Compared to the rest of the show, they turned down the tempo and the noise a bit but was no less impactful. I think their vocalist Claudia



RECALL

thing algorithmic autoplay or culled from the licensed library on streaming services. Many tracks on this tape are simply not available on Spotify! If you really want to study the "Ancient Texts", start swapping mixtapes with your friends diving deep into punk history. Don't worry about pretentious record snobs, and definitely don't both with what's on a "Top 100 Essential Punkrock Tunes" playlist.

—Martin Force



THE NOT – “LP I”

When we rented extra smoke machines for our last show, we just kept blasting THE NOT until they were completely wreathed in that foul cotton candy shit. It fit them perfectly – lead singer stalking the stage imperiously cutting through the fog looking roughly 6'11", drowned in squalls of feedback and pounding bass and drums. You know, a fucking band, right?

THE NOT have been crushing sets in town recently, and now that they have recordings up we can hear the extremely solid songwriting underpinning the aural assault. It's been released as one solid track which is usually a thumbs down for my persnickety ass, but here it's perfect – the fuzz washes over everything like a rainstorm, tying the songs together with the sounds of broken glass and sirens. The lyrics are blunt, political and vicious, exactly suited to this style of noise punk, and the rhythm section is locked to a core beat keeping it all properly on rails. The fast songs (ie most of them) rip, but in my opinion they're most powerful on the slower one "Stomp", and the pits prove it. More tracks by fall hopefully!

FFO: LEBENDEN TOTEN, PIG DNA, CHAIN OF DOLPHINS

—Corn

SHOW REVIEWS



BLU ANXXIETY / SLASH NEED / HRT / LAURA KRIEG @ Sotterenea, Montreal, June 21, 2024

This was day 1 of the Noise Not Borders curated shows at the Suoni Per Il Popolo fest. This was a fun goth punk dancey show in the sweaty Sotterenea basement. LAURA KRIEG opened and I have never seen her perform before. It was a very 80's vibe, dancy synth tracks with vocals, and the occasional guitar lead. HRT set up on the floor and played a new set tonight. Super powerful industrial influenced noisy beats and hard vocals. Their set started a bit rough, but it all came together once the sound got dialed in and the crowd got a little sweaty. SLASH NEED played a solid set, and with their backup dancers, they really commanded the stage. Their vocalist has a great stage presence and was all over the place. The crowd was really warmed up and ready for BLU ANXXIETY. They have played here a few times over the past couple years, and everyone was hyped that they were back. I think everyone in the entire place was dancing by the end of their set. Overall a great very sweaty show.

can only be described as "disgusting"—but in the best way possible.

Despite seemingly being recorded on a basic four-track, the demo maintains a surprising level of dynamism. This lo-fi production underscores a crucial point: the quality of the recording is secondary to the passion and energy behind it. Who cares if the recording quality is shit? Just buy a tape recorder and go for it. A lot of times, it sounds better that way anyway.

FFO: U-NIX, BLACK BUTTON, EUNIX, PHANTOM

The tape is put out by Westward Audio and Visual, and you can listen here: <https://www.bandcamp.com/album/demo-2024>

—Crash JT



DUST COLLECTOR – S/T

Spicy opinion, but sometimes it helps to judge the book by its cover... In a world where even your average jock hardcore band is using that blown out photoshop 'xerox' filter on there covers it can be hard to sought out the good and the bad. But thankfully las DUST COLLECTOR take the guessing work out of it for you.

With the help of a good close friend to F.A.R. Company and obviously DUST COLLECTOR guns, Insane Moblish from Mexico doing the artwork, you can automatically guess right away what your gonna get here. It's gonna sound like, take a guess... DUST NOISE, tah dahl! Which is great, I always muse or brainstorm in my dumb brain what if some of my favorite old bands did another release??

DUST COLLECTOR do exactly that for me they gave me another DUST NOISE release!! Even better DUST COLLECTOR are heavily active and have 2 other releases out as well!

From city that looks like the GTA 5 map featuring members of END RESULT, ANGUISHED LIFE and a heap of other bands. So definitely keep this band in your scopes if it isn't already.

For fans of DUST NOISE, durrrrrr!!!

Listen here: <https://dustcollectorpunk.band-camp.com/album/dust-collector-s-t>

Email: Dustcollectorpunk@gmail.com

—F.A.R. Company



MAUSER – “CACOPHONOUS MEMORIES”

This is a discography/retrospective tape for Florida's MAUSER. Their releases are presented in chronological order, starting with 2010's "End Of The Line" and ending with a 2013 live set recorded at Portland's Black Water. Everything has been remastered by Will Killingsworth.

MAUSER plays a typical raw hardcore d-beat punk. Lots of booming tom rolls. Mostly fast, sometimes midtempo, sometimes really fast. Raw and harsh yells are delivered through some cave reverb and/or delay at different times. The guitar tone is very harsh, couple of distortion pedals slammed through a Peavey combo amp. Everything is redlined. Despite the harsh tone, I detect some crust influence. There is no melody here, but from some of the tom-heavy slower meandering parts I get a crutsy feeling. There are some crusty riffs. It's a nice balance to the otherwise raw and relentless onslaught.

The inclusion of a live set is nice, it's not a board recording or anything but it captures the band's live essence quite well if you either never saw them or like me just can't recall. More live bootleg tapes!!

The tape itself is beautiful and meticulously put together like everything else from Sore

Mind. The tape has a wild full pad print on both sides, the j-card cover is stamped... a tape for tape heads.

MAUSER's last release before this tape was 2012, and their last show was around 2014–2015. But they never broke up and a note in the liner notes suggests they are back living close together and likely to start playing again...

Tape available on Sore Mind: <https://www.soremind.com>

—Martin Force



TRASH COMPACTOR BURIAL— “Commandeering of Children's Organs”

The term ‘noise not music’ gets thrown up these days like a cheap beer full of cigarette butts and usually by bands you can still hear the riff in a coherent way. Which is always kinda annoyed me, the amount of records I have taken home expecting the ‘raw noise punk’ label to actually produce a proper fuckin racket just to chuck it on the player and find out it was actually a ‘well cooked coherent punk’ record done in a studio made by a music chef of some fancy souhts. So I am always dubious on recommendations from labels and it's genuine pursuit of endorsing a proper fuckn racket. But thankfully R.I.P. PEACE out in Queensland Australia to the rescue with this debut release from this multi state band also from Australia called TRASH COMPACTOR BURIAL.

10 tracks of absolute fucking furious nonsense. Clearly not done in a studio and apparently all recorded through VHS tapes and video equipment, which gives it a well blown out shit show of a recording and also explains why there's a lot of movie samples throughout side A. The guitars sound like a kettle full of hotdogs on a stove screaming at boiling point,

the drummer sounds like a 10 year old on way to much red cordial, there's some signs of bass in there and obviously something else getting used but not even going to try and guess what it is with this band. To round this all up, duel vocals from both sides on the screaming perspective of the modern neanderthal with the teradactyl “ARGGHHHS” and caveman “URGGGGHSSSS”. But to me the vocals sound like 2 people been murdered with a delay pedal, one of them kinda sounds like there screaming in their car on the way home from a bad day at work through peak hour traffic. Highlight tracks on this tape are “Shooting Up Mustard Gas” (don't know how that's possible but I would like to see) and the title track “Commandeering of Children's Organs”. Very dark nihilistic subjects and themes in play here, if you haven't guessed that already. But wait that's only side A!!

But don't expect a repeat of fast blown out demolition derby on side B. This side of the tape seems to be some sought of arguments through CB radios with various pedals and feed back to mess it all about. Kinda seems to be a heap of middle aged men just yelling at each other and talking shit. The tape J-card does say that side B is anxiety inducing ambience. Their not wrong, some parts of these arguments are pretty concerning and hard to listen to if you're not familiar with how dead shits talk on a building sight. Kinda like family dinner with that one uncle that's balding with a ponytail and has sweet stories about U.F.O. abductions but there's a whole table of them yelling their shit.

This is not your average demo or release?? What ever this is going by. This is a proper step up in racket making, finding all new pockets of insanity to put in a plastic bag and huff and pushing music equipment into realms science couldn't even explain or would even want to. TRASH COMPACTOR BURIAL don't deal in coherent!! This has been an absolute treat to find... Remember kids if you can hear the riff it's gonna be shit hahahaha.

FFO: SORE THROAT, DEATH DUST EXTRACTOR and L.P.C.

Listen here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xN_rF_pkfBQ

Cassette available from R.I.P PEACE Records: rippeacerecords@gmail.com

—F.A.R. Company



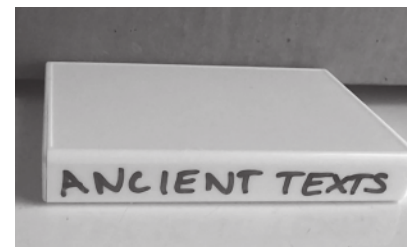
NO FUTURE — “Mirror” LP

NO FUTURE from Perth, Australia have put out a masterpiece of noisy hardcore punk with their Mirror LP. The bass and drums are way out front on this mix and its well deserved, the noisy guitar tracks cut through perfectly when they are needed and the vocals are super powerful with maybe the perfect reverb balance. The lyrics are poetic and center around struggling through life in this corrupt immoral capitalist world. This LP rips and I hope I get to see them live cause if it's anything as raging as this LP I'm gonna be sore the next day.

FFO SIAL, DESTINO FINALE.

Jointly released on Iron Lung Records in the US, and TSR in Australia.

Listen: <https://nofuturepunk.bandcamp.com/>
—Vanislejay



V/A (Mixtape) — “Ancient Texts”

Every year, I organize a March Mixtape Swap where two-dozen or so of my friends contribute new mixtape and receive different mixtapes in return. This year my friend Jay submitted the “Ancient Texts” mixtape.

This mixtape has an origin story. Montreal's DEADBOLT had recently played a set at 2024's Montreal Madhouse that include a cover of WARZONE's “As One”. The crowd response for the cover was so disappointing that the singer, Julia, admonished the crowd: “You all need to go study your ancient texts!”

Inspired, Jay tried to compile his best attempt at the “Ancient Texts” of hardcore and punk, closing the tape with WARZONE's “As One”. Why am I reviewing a mixtape though? Because this mixtape is fucking great. It's a 90 minute tape that delivers on the premise: a comprehensive overview of essential songs in hardcore and punk. It's without a doubt the best “hardcore classics” mix I've ever heard.

I feel like 50% of my time spent in punk venues/bars/record stores (80% if in Toronto), I am subjected to what I assume is a Spotify playlist titled “Hardcore Punk Classics” or some such bullshit. Or maybe it's just autoplay from Spotify or YouTube circling the drain of lowest common denominator #punkrock. BLACK FLAG, BAD RELIGION, DEAD KENNEDYS, PENNYWISE, maybe THE CLASH and a “wild card” like RISE AGAINST. You all know what I'm talking about, you have all heard this playlist.

Jay's “Ancient Texts” features none of those bands, and yet no one could seriously argue that any of the bands included shouldn't be part of the “classics”. Everyone will find something new or obscure on this tape, but it's also not pretentious. Jay's “Ancient Texts” are not restricted to some first wave, nor a specific cutoff date, mixing in LIMP WRIST, INFEST, and CROSSED OUT alongside MDC, FAITH, VOID, THE GERMS, and BAD BRAINS. There are bands you would *never* see on some bullshit algorithmic playlist like SPITBOY, THE BAGS, LOS CRUDOS, and tracks from bands in different scenes or parts of the world like BASTARD, ANTI CIMEX, THE MOB, NAPALM DEATH, ZOUNDS etc. My only complaint is I would've liked to see a BLATZ song alongside the BLITZ track because that would be funny. There are two different songs from different bands called “Drug Free Youth” back to back so, nice one.

You can't get a copy of this tape, unless you know Jay and ask him for a copy. The real point of this review is that any mixtape like this, made by a friend with broad open taste in punk, lots of experience and a bit of consideration and care, will absolutely destroy any—